

Birmingham It was over the names of these four that, in 1909, the Minority Report was presented a Report so famous that for two decades after its presentation, the term 'Minority Report' ⁵ was always taken to mean this particular document

Majority and Minority Reports alike demanded the abolition of Boards of Guardians, Union areas, and General Mixed Workhouses in fact, the abolition of the entire structure elected by the Poor Law Commission of 1834 for the purpose of deterrence. Deterrence both Reports rejected. While they agreed in demolition, however, they differed in construction. The cardinal point of separation lay in the fact that whereas the Majority, in order to maintain "unity in relief," proposed to set up *ad hoc* Public Assistance Committees for that purpose, the Minority said, in effect, that since destitution is a symptom of social disease, which ought to be prevented at its root, what is required is a break-up of the Poor Law, not its substitution.

Its signatories called for the transference of various categories of non-able-bodied persons in need to the modern, specialised authorities already in existence. Thus, the sick should go to the Public Health Committee, the children to the Education Committee, the mentally deficient to the Asylums Committee, and the aged to the Pensions Committee of the various local authorities. At the same time, a Registrar of Public Assistance was to be set up for the purpose of financial co-ordination as between the different committees and any voluntary agencies.

Drastic divergence appears in the treatment of the able-bodied. There the Minority Report boldly stated that only the National Government could effect the far-reaching schemes of prevention and of curative treatment that were required. The unemployed belonged to very differing categories, requiring different treatment. Insurance, decasualisation, dovetailing of seasonal employ-